

# Cabo Rojo

## National Wildlife Refuge

photo: Susan M. Rice



photo: USFWS



photo: W. Metzger



photo: Dept. of Natural Resources



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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1974.
- Acres: 587.
- Location: From Mayaguez, drive south on Route 2 (main highway) and exit Route 100 toward Cabo Rojo. When Route 100 ends, turn left onto Route 101. Drive .8 mile, then turn right onto Route 301. Drive approximately 3 miles and look for refuge sign.
- Administered under Caribbean Islands NWR office.

### Natural History

- The refuge lies along the coastal plain of southwestern Puerto Rico. This land had been in agricultural use for at least two centuries prior to Service ownership. Heavy grazing left the area barren except for a limited number of trees in drainages and near homesteads.
- A number of native bird species, including the endangered yellow-shouldered blackbird, occur in and around the refuge.
- At present, the refuge is approximately 65 percent forest/scrub and 35 percent grassland.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Seven-person staff.
- 3,500 visitors annually.

### Refuge Objectives

- To restore and enhance native wildlife and plants, particularly the endangered yellow-shouldered blackbird.
- To increase the level of environmental awareness among residents and visitors.

### Management Tools

- Haying.
- Reforestation.
- Law enforcement.
- Environmental education.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Visitor center/contact station (at Caribbean Islands NWR office).
- Hiking trails.
- Wildlife observation and nature photography.

### Questions and Answers

*Why is haying allowed on the refuge?*  
Haying is being used as an intermediate management tool to control the spread of exotic vegetation.

*What visitor opportunities are available at the refuge?*  
A visitor center is located at the refuge office. In addition, a 2-mile interpretive trail and approximately 12 miles of hiking trails are available for birdwatching, photography, and wildlife observation.

*When is the refuge open to the public?*  
Both the refuge and visitor center are open 7:30 am-4:00 pm, Monday-Friday.

*What resident bird species might I see at the refuge?*  
Visitors may see species such as the Puerto Rican tody, Adelaide's warbler, Caribbean elaenia, troupial, and the endangered yellow-shouldered blackbird.

*Are any other national wildlife refuges close to Cabo Rojo?*  
Yes, Laguna Cartagena National Wildlife Refuge is just a short drive from Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge.